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ABSTRACT

Language development, including literacy learning (reading and writing) was studied in a first grade classroom in a culture-in-contact situation. The language behavior of three boys--one mainstream culture member, another from black inner-city culture, and a third from Appalachian culture--and the language of a teacher from mainstream culture were analyzed according to qualitative methods including discourse analysis and analyses of responses in reading groups, responses to procedures such as M. Clay's "Concepts About Print Survey," and the students' talk about reading and writing in interviews. Preliminary findings indicated that the children had learned many of the rules of classroom discourse, including those used in literacy teaching and learning, and were becoming literate. However, some cultural differences in language interaction and literacy learning were found. The findings suggest that educators need to develop an understanding of language interaction and learning patterns of oral cultures in the United States and that a variety of assessment techniques in reading are needed to measure learning in that area. (Author/FL)

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Transition into Literacy: An Analysis of Language Behavior During Reading and Writing Instruction in a First Grade Classroom

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Interrelationship of Oral and Written Language

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Today, during the consideration of the relationships between oral and written language learning, I'd like to approach it from an interactional language behavior framework involving both children and their teacher. We so often study child language development by focusing primarily on the child and his or her expanding communicative competence. Instead, I would like to propose that when we are inquiring into school age child language development, it is both short-sighted and simply not possible to ignore the effects of schooling on that development. For example, we know there are children who are early readers who have actually been flunked in first grade because they were judged to be deficient in reading ability. What interaction took place between the already reading child, the reading series or materials used in the classroom, and the teacher? What could have been discerned from a study of that interaction that could have led possibly to the participants approaching each other and the materials in a different, more positive and fruitful manner?

Consequently, today I will consider oral language use and the development of literacy -- learning to read and write -- within a language interaction framework in an educational setting, and share with you some of our preliminary findings about aspects of each as exemplified in one classroom.

I would also like to draw in the two other themes in this institute -- social implications and cross-cultural considerations of oral and written language learning -- as each area can have profound influence on teacher-student interaction during language learning lessons and on the teaching/learning climate as a whole in a classroom, a school, a district, a

geographical area, and in a nation such as ours. If we as a society are, in fact, going to be able to insure an equal opportunity for children in our schools to become literate, to expand their communicative competence in highly important ways, we must have information on how a cultures-in-contact educational situation can influence this learning.

Let me briefly define a major concept which runs throughout this paper and our research. Then I'll describe our research project which generated the data my colleagues and I are analyzing on the expansion of communicative competence, including literacy learning, in six and seven year olds in a multicultural classroom.

Communicative competence has become a conceptual framework for us in our research on language development. Basically, it is the knowledge of language structure and function. This knowledge includes the rule systems for semantics, syntax and phonology, as well as a set of appropriateness rules which have been defined as logical, psychological and social in nature. My hunch is that they are largely social. Thus, communicative competence is essentially the language abilities of the speaker and listener (Hymes, 1972). Is one able to vary speech and gesture to fit the expectations of others in a situation in order to transmit meaning? Is one able to comprehend what others are communicating, what others mean whether it's spoken or written? The actual language used in the communication is only part of competence. The speaker must also know <u>how</u> and <u>when</u> to use a language or languages or different varieties of a language, and with <u>whom</u>, and, of course, when not to. We don't discuss math with our minister or

speak pig Latin in the classroom. Our knowledge of what is appropriate or inappropriate is part of communicative competence.

Schools play a powerful role in expanding communicative competence. To quote Mehan, Cazden, Coles, Fisher and Maroules,

> In general terms, "communicative competence" (Hymes, 1972) in the classroom involves knowing that certain ways of talking and acting are appropriate on some occasion and not others, knowing with whom, when and where they can speak. This requires students to bring their action into synchrony with people who are already talking. To do so, they must employ classroom rules for taking turns, produce ordered utterances, and make coherent topical ties. (1976, 196-7).

Also, schooling includes both instruction designed to increase ability to communicate orally and in writing (speaking and writing) and to help students comprehend other's speech and writing (listening and reading) (DeStefano, 1978). The teaching of literacy is a large part of the school's effort to increase a student's ability to communicate in our society. Thus, communicative competence means competence in both oral and written modes of expression. Students are expected to speak, read, and write in schools -- and to do it frequently. Put another way, students are expected to learn a new set of registers,both in the oral and written modes, with new syntactic forms and lexical items, and maybe even some phonological changes if bidialectalism is a target.

Communicative competence is developed and taught in a language interaction setting which I have characterized as part of the powerful "hidden curriculum" that exists in schooling. Mehan, Cazden and colleagues, describe this curriculum cogently, noting it's full of "tactic rules" about <u>form</u>, and that students must master it as well as the overt curriculum. They state:

> ... classroom competence involves matters of form as well as content. To be successful in the classroom, students must not only know the content of academic subjects, they must learn the appropriate form in which to cast their academic knowledge (p. 161).
>
> Because classroom rules are tacit and implicitly communicated to students, they must engage in active interpretive work. Students interpret implicit classroom rules that specify different courses of action and vary from occasion to occasion. Successful participation in the culture of the classroom involves the ability to relate behavior, both academic and social, to a given classroom situation, in terms of implicit rules. This involves going beyond the information to understand the teacher linking particular features in general patterns by filling in contextual information (cf. Cicourel, 1973).
>
> To be competent members of the classroom community, then, students need academic skills and interactional skills. They must produce factually correct academic information, and they must provide this content in the appropriate form (1976, 198-199).

Language use is highly involved in a student's mastering this curriculum as many of the "tacit rules" referred to are social appropriateness language use rules. These include ways of talking and writing which are part of this curriculum.

Within this conceptual framework so briefly sketched, my colleagues, Harold Pepinsky, a psychologist, and Tobie S. Sanders, a Ph.D. candidate in our Graduate Program in Language, Literature and Reading, and I are currently conducting research on language learning in a multicultural setting. The impetus behind our selection of the following context for examining communicative competence? A recurrent complaint one often hears from adult members of our society is that our children aren't learning basic skills, such as reading and writing. To counteract this lament, educators have and are instituting a variety of programs designed to remedy this purported

problem. At the same time,administrators and teachers have been made increasingly aware of problems in teaching children who, within the same classroom, exhibit dissimilar backgrounds of language and culture. Recognition of such diversity also invites the development of alternative methods for coping with it, as Hymes suggests, exemplifying the challenge of as much as the difficulty in providing students with equal "access to (different) kinds of competence" (Hymes, 1979).

For instance, inner-city Blacks and urbanized Appalachians represent cultures that are essentially and traditionally oral in character. Members of these cultures are likely to have achieved far lower levels of literacy than persons from mainstream North American culture. In consequence, their children are likely to have come from homes in which there is much greater reliance upon the spoken rather than the written word as a mode of communicating and being communicated with (Labov, 1977; Montgomery, 1972; Stewart, 1974).

To investigate the expansion of communicative competence, of control over aspects of the spoken and written language, we selected for study a group of first-graders and their teacher in an elementary school within the public school system of a large midwestern city. When our research began last Fall, the system had just be reorganized under a court-ordered plan of desegregation. And so, for the first time, the classroom included white and black mainstream culture children bussed in from an adjacent neighborhood.

Because male students in general seem to have more trouble than females in learning to be literate, we chose for intensive observation and analysis

three boys: one from inner-city Black culture, a second from Appalachian culture, and the third a mainstream culture child. Along with these boys, we centered attention on their teacher, a middle-class female with six years of teaching experience in the school.

Three periods of observation were used: one over 4 days in the fourth week of September, 1979, a second for 3 days in the second week of November, 1979, and the third over 3 days in the first week of February, 1980 -- also the first week of the second semester. Records were collected in the form of video- and audiotapes, note-taking by at least one of us during classtime, notes on interviews with the teacher containing her evaluations of the students' progress, interviews with the individual students, and an independent measure: Marie Clay's (1972) Concepts About Print Survey.

Our discourse analysis framework for looking at the language interaction between teacher and students includes several approaches based on classroom language data. One is a British analytic system devised by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975); the other major format is the one created by Hugh Mehan (1979) when he analyzed Courtney Cazden's classroom in San Diego. In our preliminary analysis, we have focused on the boys' communicative competence: their ability to use language (including written forms) in the classroom and to do so appropriately (DeStefano, 1978).

In this classroom of first graders, as in many others, much of the school day is devoted to literacy instruction, constituting a major portion of academic activity during the school day. In actuality, our teacher seems to be guided by two major objectives for learning by her students: she wants them (1) to be orderly in their behavior, including language behavior, and (2) to become proficient in their reading. Writing per se

receives little stress in daily curriculum. How well they perform in these areas seems to be the basis on which the teacher assesses their relative competence as members of the classroom community (Mehan, 1979).

Within the agenda area of orderliness, turn-taking rules are clear in the teacher's behavior during a literacy instruction lesson. First, she controls and allocates the turns on the majority of occasions. This is part of a teacher's documented role as a turn-allocator who is responsible for assigning discourse turns during classroom lessons (Mehan, 1979; McHoul, 1979). Within the Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) framework of classroom discourse analysis, after she asks a question, she makes the nominations to specific children to indicate it's their turn, clearly using the "one-speaker-at-a-time" requirement (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974). This nomination is usually made by calling the student's name, although she less frequently nods at a child or looks directly at them to indicate a turn.

What triggers s particular allocation? In some cases, the children may make a nonverbal bid by raising their hand. Verbal bids in the form of an elicitation are discouraged as, evidently, they are seen as not "orderly." Then the teacher will call on one of the children whose hand is raised.

In a reading group, turns serve other purposes than "checking on" which children think they have a "correct" response to a question or on their attention to the task at hand, hands up evidently being equated with attending. Turns also are allocated for specific instructional reasons, particularly to nominate children to read aloud from the reading book text and to nominate children to answer comprehension questions after they've read a story. Every child is to have a chance to do each of these activities

at least once during a segment of the lesson. The teacher also carefully allocates turns for a word-calling game called "Around the World" which serves in part, as an evaluation of a child's visual memory for "sight words." Thus, turns are controlled and allocated by the teacher to provide her with feedback from individual children as to their mastery of the literacy abilities and skills she is teaching. As such, they perform an important function in a teacher's academic agenda.

Discourse rules within the literacy learning lessons are also apparent in our data, but perhaps not as directly. For example, one of the major instructional premises infusing the teacher's behavior is that the process of reading is decoding words. So when the students are reading silently, then bid for help on something they're having trouble with, it's always a word they ask for help with. They do not say something like "I can't understand this story." or have some way of asking for help with an entire sentence.

When they read aloud, as they do in each reading group, they also read word by word, e.g., each word receiving basically sentence intonation. So we hear on our tapes: This↘...is↘...where↘...we↘...want↘...to↘...go↘.

Finally, the "Around the World" game is based on accuracy of so-called sight word recognition. It's played very quickly, with each child responding, in turn, as fast as possible to a single word on a card by saying it aloud. If a child doesn't call out the exact word, she or he is out of the game and must sit down. Thus, in effect, reading is presented as largely word recognition with discourse patterns involving either single word responses or accentuating inquiry about words.

Writing in this classroom revolves primarily around two activities: 1) writing a sentence to describe a picture each child has drawn, and

2) practicing handwriting. In fact, writing instruction early in the school year basically consisted of handwriting teaching and learning of manuscript printing. Time was spent on children's practicing forming upper case letters. Later in the school year, they were asked by the teacher to complete a single sentence to describe a picture they draw, the subject of which is often indicated by her. The directions were "to write a story" about their picture. Other than these two activities, there was no other children's writing in this classroom during our data collection periods.

How well the three students in our study have learned the substantive and procedural rules involved in the type of oral language development we are studying and in learning to be literate can only be answered in preliminary fashion at this time. Apparently, though, the students have accommodated. As far as learning and complying with turn-taking rules, the data thus far indicated awareness and use of these rules by the three boys. For example, the mainstream culture consultant makes some pupil initiated elicitations, during lessons, in the following manner: "Can I tell you two things?" or "Can I tell you something?" However, he usually then responds to the teacher's directive to answer with a reply well within the confines of the lesson, e.g., no change of topic. The other two boys neither asked questions like "Can I tell you something?" nor made verbal bid/elicitations by starting to talk before they'd raise a hand or been called on by the teacher. The Black inner-city consultant does not bid as frequently as the other two boys, while the Appalachian culture boy does bid, usually to inquire about some classroom procedural rule.

However, the Black inner-city consultant does not appear to have learned the range of rules for responses the other two boys have. For

example, when the teacher says to a child, "My, what a nice picture," a response would be given, especially in mainstream culture. It's a conversational opening to which a child is supposed to respond, at least with a mumbled "thank you," or, better yet, with an explanation of what it is and so on. When our inner-city consultant is approached by the teacher in that manner, he is silent. He also doesn't look her in the eye or smile at her. Within his culture, that is respectful, appropriate child behavior in interaction with an adult, particularly a "strange" one. Later, the teacher characterized him as "sneaky" because, so she put it, he's verbal on the playground but not in the classroom with her. Here we can begin to see some culture clash as the two behave according to their own cultural imperatives in response to one another.

Now we turn to the questions of how well do our consultants seem to be learning literacy instruction rules and what kind of progress do they appear to be making in becoming literate?

Our consultants seem adept at learning the classroom discourse rules for literacy instruction. They each respond appropriately, if extensively, to phonic word analysis prompts from their teachers. "I'm stuck on ..." elicits from the children, followed by "Make the ___ sound" directives from the teacher, yielded about equal quality analytic and then synthetic word construction.

However, some important differences were observed. Our inner-city Black culture student, who is in the lowest reading group, asked for this type of assistance less frequently than either the mainstream or Appalachian culture student. In terms of how many phonics instruction type prompts by

the teacher are utilized per word, the Appalachian student demonstrated the ability to have a word almost totally segmented into constituent sounds and yet resynthesize it.

"I'm stuck on n-o-t." elicited the following series of prompts:

Teacher: Make the 'n' sound.

Student: 'En.'

Teacher: No, 'n,' 'n.'

Student: Nen.

Teacher: Make just the 'n.' Let's hear it.

Student: 'N.'

Teacher: Now 't' sound. 'N,' 't.'

Student: 'Not.'

The mainstream culture student asked for frequent aid via an "I'm stuck on ..." format. However, in contrast to the extensive "clueing" done for the Appalachian boy, the teacher's assistance with only the initial sound or even merely a clarification response pinpointing the word in question frequently resulted in his recognizing the "correct" word. For example:

Student: I don't know what that first word is.

Teacher: (spelling for clarification) H-e-r-e?

Student: 'Here.'

According to our analysis via the Mehan (1979) framework, the teacher utilizes student bids for help in decoding words as feedback evidence that the students are, in fact, reading silently when asked to do so. The mainstream culture student provides such feedback frequently. The Appalachian culture student also provides this form of feedback, but simultaneously implies he is "in more trouble" with his decoding skills than the mainstream culture child. This implication is important as he is repeating

first grade, having missed "too much school" his initial year in first grade, although he did not use the same reading series.

The child from the inner-city Black culture provides the teacher with little feedback of this nature. Apparently a number of factors contributing to this including his "cultural taboo" to initiating his talk with an adult. His reading group meets for the least overall amount of time, yet when they do meet, they've already overheard the stories from other higher groups at least twice. His group is also asked to silently read somewhat smaller segments of text. Perhaps most importantly, he may simply know all the words and not "get stuck." On the surface then, it would appear that the inner city Black culture student adheres most succintly to the teacher's directive to "read silently to yourself and find out...", but he provides less overt feedback of doing so than either the mainstream or Appalachian culture student.

According to the Mehan (1979) analytic framework, the teacher stated or observed procedures rather explicitly in establishing an orderly pattern of response in "round robin" drill. Once the pattern was established, she provided an index of the rule in operation. For example, early "Round the World" flash card games were accompanied by complete instructions from the teacher. "OK, we're going to play 'Round the World.' Stand up in front of your chairs, so you'll be able to sit down easily. Are you ready to pay attention? Remember if you're a person that maybe is having to sit down, maybe you need to pay attention as everyone says a word.".

Children were then called in turn to respond to the flash cards. Once this pattern was established, the presence of the Round the World flash cards in the teacher's hands was sufficient to provide an index of

the coming set of operational rules. Our subjects seem to demonstrate about equal ability to respond to indices of operational rules, not just the one for "Around the World." Indeed, although the inner city culture Black child now finds himself in a reading group with just one other student, he continues to conform to the reading group set of rules for managing larger groups, e.g., one raises one's hand; one waits to be called on; one may ask for assistance or respond to a bid for a product as when the teacher asks "What does this sign say?"; one does not offer additional or marginally related remarks; one waits one's turn.

What evidence do we have of our subjects' success in becoming literate as compared to their success in learning and utilizing classroom rules for literacy learning instructional frames? Some perspective on various functional definitions of literacy learning success are necessary.

The single most overt measure of literacy learning success in the classroom is reading group membership. During the initial data collection period, September, 1979, there was one small reading group, general classroom readiness instruction, and four children additionally attending reading classes taught by a specialist. All of our subjects at that time participated at the general classroom instruction level. By our second collection period, November, 1979, three reading groups existed and included all children except a few who worked solely with the reading specialist. Our mainstream and Appalachian culture students were members of the middle reading group. The teacher called the groups in order daily from top group to bottom group by the title of the reader they were "in." Our inner city Black culture child was in the bottom group having no name. This group was not "in" a book before Thanksgiving, 1979, but rather worked primarily from dittoed exercise sheets.

By February, 1980, the following reading group ranking and teacher evaluation of success in becoming literate existed. In the classroom there are now four groups, the lowest level having been split in two, and some children still only doing reading tasks outside the classroom with the specialist.

The mainstream culture child received a satisfactory reading progress report on his report card. The teacher expressed no concern of retention for him. He was still a member of what is the middle reading group. The teacher observed that "He did not really try very hard" in the group and "wasn't applying himself," but basically was progressing at the pre-determined rate. He had also successfully passed the reading series criterion referenced progress test for moving from level to level. Our observed and recorded data of his participation in the reading group during the third collection period, February, 1980, showed him to be volunteering less, attending less, and responding less than during the earlier two data collection periods. Also, he did not do any self-selected reading or writing during this period although he had selected books and made text approximations earlier in the year.

Using a measure of progress devised by Marie Clay (1972), we ascertained that his performance on her Concepts About Print Survey increased two points from the September, 1979, to the February, 1980, administration while the stanine score remained the same. In other words, at the end of six months, he remained in the same stanine he originally tested in at the first of the year. And when asked in an interview to explain "how to read" to someone like Mork from Ork, he responded with essentially an understanding that reading was word recognition.

Samples of his writing over a three week period in February, 1980, were analyzed according to Clay's schema for written language evaluation (1972). His directionality principles rates (5) 'probably satisfactory' message quality rated (4) 'not yet satisfactory;' and language level rated (4) 'not yet satisfactory.'

The teacher's evaluation of his literacy achievement is that basically he was acquired the necessary skills but is "not applying himself." However, he is in no danger of being retained in first grade.

The Appalachian culture child is also still a member of the middle reading group, but his teacher has expressed concern for his progress, noting frequent and sustained absence. To "combat" his problems, she has placed him in the "top bottom group," so he is now in two reading groups. In addition, he also works with the reading specialist outside of the classroom. The multiple placements seem somewhat disconcerting to this student. When asked what reading group he is in, he responds "I'm in 'Dinosaurs,'" the middle group only. Indeed, analysis of his discourse shows frequent references to "We're almost in Rainbows." The Rainbows book has just been completed by the top reading group so our consultant seems to believe that it is possible to somehow catch up to the top group. Further evidence of his displeasure with additional placement in the lower group is seen in his having to be reminded and called by name to that group, while he seems alert and ready to attend his initial placement group.

While there is evidence of reading at frustration level present in his efforts, nonetheless this subject frequently volunteers in his groups, has continued to self-select books during his free time and makes fairly accurate text approximations from those books. Also, he has passed the

reading series criterion referenced test required for his placement in the middle group.

Reviewing his performance on M. Clay's Concepts About Print (1972), his score has remained the same from the September, 1979, administration to the February, 1980, administration. He, too, did not move during that six month period. When interviewed about how to explain to someone how to read, he responded "You read to somebody" and "I'd teach him how to read" but could offer no more explanation than that.

His teacher is aware of some of his difficulties and has prescribed repetition of reading levels he has already gone through. He is not in danger of being retained because he can only be held back once. (He is repeating first grade.)

In February, 1980, his writing samples were collected and analyzed according to Clay's written language evaluation format (1972). He scored (5) 'probably satisfactory' in directional principles, (4) 'not yet satisfactory' in message quality, and (4) 'not yet satisfactory' in language level.

Though the inner-city Black culture child is in the lowest reading group, he seems to have maintained enthusiasm for becoming literate and displays an awareness of his own growth, as evidenced in part by comments made during his last Sand administration (Clay, 1972). Also, when interviewed about what it is to read, he first responded with "We make stuff," which in his experience is a very accurate observation. However, when probed, he finally answered that he "thought" and then "sounded the word out." He went on that "you have to know the sounds so you could sound the

word so you could know it." This is the most insightful and complicated explanation offered by any of our consultants -- and in November, 1979.

Despite his enthusiasm and progress, he received a "needs improvement" on his progress report at the end of the first semester in February, 1980. In fact, the teacher has expressed concern for retention in first grade to his parents, though she thinks he will "pull through."

This consultant's score improved on the Concepts About Print Survey 5 points from the September, 1979, to February, 1980, administrations. This is movement from the middle of the fourth to the top of the fifth stanine, although he remains a stanine behind the other two boys. He also seemed very aware of areas that were causing him confusion and performed additional tasks of his own devising with the Sand text.

Scores on the reading series criterion referenced tests for proceeding through reading series levels were not available as his group was not tested upon movement into their current text, and no previous tests were required.

Samples of his writing were also collected for a three week period in February, 1980, and analyzed on Clay's written language evaluation format. Like his mainstream and Appalachian peers, he scored (5) 'probably satisfactory,' in directional principles, (4) 'not yet satisfactory' in message quality, and (4) 'not yet satisfactory' in language level.

From these preliminary findings on oral language learning, literacy learning, and some of their connections, as revealed by discourse analysis and other techniques, there appear some implications for educators whether they be parents, teachers or administrators. One of the strongest is for school personnel to understand the various cultures involved in a cultures-

in-contact school and/or classroom setting. In our case, there seems to be almost no cognizance of the fact that both Appalachian and Black inner-city cultures are essentially oral and not literary in nature. Little literary tradition in a student's life can mean the task of becoming literate is viewed far differently from, say, a child who's been read to since infancy. And in a classroom where the teacher is also a member of a literary culture, literacy learning may be separated from oral aspects of language, which for oral culture children carry the major burden of the development of communicative competence. Thus, storytelling, free talk, conversations, and play or creativity with oral forms are often curtailed, if not discouraged or eliminated as "extraneous" to learning to become literate, and the ties that could be made between the oral and written forms which would be valuable to oral culture children simply may not be formed. If this is the case, there is increased likelihood for clashes or confusion to occur between a mainstream culture teacher and students from oral cultures.

Another important area of knowledge for educators is that of different patterns of language interaction among cultures. For example, in Black inner-city culture, parents may rarely address a younger child directly but instead refer to some prescribed behavior in an almost metaphoric manner such as -- while gazing in another direction -- "hard heads make soft bottoms." According to Geneva Smitherman (1980), the children understand what this means. But it's a very different interaction pattern from mainstream culture teacher-student interaction which involves a direct gaze and far less aphoristic language.

Peer interaction and teaching/learning is also prevalent in Black inner-city and Appalachian cultures where older children "instruct"

younger ones on appropriate behavior, including language use. Perhaps normally highly teacher-centered classrooms could provide a more conducive atmosphere to these children by providing a culturally familiar pedagogical environment with peer teaching and much student-student interaction.

Within the area of literacy learning specifically, our preliminary results suggest that children will not necessarily give expected overt signals of progress in learning to read. In our case, it is asking for help in decoding separate words. Our Black inner-city culture boy does this very rarely, yet has demonstrated the most growth of the three consultants in being able to articulate how one goes about decoding as taught in that classroom. Thus, a teacher, whatever his or her approach to reading, must make a variety of assessments of progress, hopefully well beyond those specified by the reading series, in an attempt to understand the progress of many children. However, as Jerome Harste so clearly puts it, "Rather than explore the range of form available to language users in an attempt to mean, one form -- the culture's selected preference -- becomes yardstick and straightjacket" (1980, 16).

Within the area of writing, I would simply like to suggest that it be done often and be integrated with classroom content, events, and life experiences, and grow out of oral discussion of a topic. In our consultants, according to our measure of growth, we've seen virtually none. This is for all the cultures in contact. My feeling is that too little writing experience has been provided to demonstrate growth at this point in time.

If time permitted, I would like to explore many more educational implications of our language learning research, as the development of

communicative competence in culturally diverse students in particular seems to be highly problematic in terms of valid evaluation and also is fraught with failure in our society as many of these children fail to become literate.

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